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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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Contact: Paul Hefner
(916) 710 1368
Paul.Hefner@ogilvypr.com

ALTERNATIVES OUTLINED FOR KEY SEGMENTS OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL

PUBLIC HELPS SHAPE FRESNO TO BAKERSFIELD, SAN JOSE TO MERCED SEGMENTS

SACRAMENTO – As progress continues on the state's largest infrastructure project, the California High-Speed Rail Authority today released its Preliminary Alternatives Analyses for the Fresno to Bakersfield and San Jose to Merced sections of the rail line.

"Today brings us one step closer to turning the promise of high-speed rail into reality – creating jobs while providing us all with a safe, convenient and affordable way to travel – but there is still a lot of work to be done," said Curt Pringle, Chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. "We are pleased that so many people have come forward and helped shape this project so it will serve their needs and be a good neighbor to communities along the route, and we will continue to listen to their feedback as this project moves forward."

Based on feedback received from more than 100 meetings with community leaders, local officials and residents, the analyses examined both potential station locations and potential track alignments to determine which options merit further study in each section of the high-speed train project and which raise too many environmental concerns or are otherwise too impractical to move forward.

The reports, which were approved by the Authority's Board of Directors, sets the parameters for the next level of design and environmental analysis, which will be incorporated into draft environmental impact reports for each portion of the project.

San Jose to Merced

In its study of potential station locations, the analysis found that an elevated high-speed rail station above the existing Caltrain Diridon Station would maximize connectivity and development potential in the station area, while underground station alternatives are impractical due to poor soils, groundwater and other concerns.

In its examination of potential track alignments, the analysis recommends minimizing impacts in the Greater Gardener neighborhoods in San Jose by utilizing the SR-87/I-280 freeway corridors for the approach to the Diridon station.

The analysis recommended that engineers continue to study proposed stations in both downtown Gilroy and an alternative location east of Gilroy.

The analysis recommends that study continue of both the Monterey Highway/Union Pacific Railroad corridor and US-101 corridor options between Morgan Hill and Gilroy. The report recommended continued study of both a trench and aerial structure options through downtown Gilroy.

The analysis used a state-of-the-art optimization tool to refine potential alignments through the Pacheco Pass. The tool identified two feasible alternatives that would minimize impacts by bringing the alignment closer to SR-152. As the process moves forward, more detailed design will further refine the precise location and profile of the two options at the eastern end of the pass to the north of the San Luis Reservoir.

As the route moves into the Central Valley itself, the analysis recommends the Henry Miller Road Alternative for further study, with the connection to either the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad alignment or the Union Pacific Railroad alignment between Merced and Fresno made by following either Avenue 24 or Avenue 21.

Fresno to Bakersfield

After considering more than a dozen options in and around Fresno, the analysis recommended further study of three possible alignments, all of them elevated: one west of the Union Pacific right of way, one to the east of it, and third that combines portions of both. The three alternatives all provide for a station in downtown Fresno near Mariposa Street -- the location requested by the City of Fresno.

South of Fresno in the more rural subsection of the project, the analysis recommends further study of an alignment adjacent to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad right of way, bypassing the city of Hanford on the east– with a potential high-speed rail station in Kings County east of Hanford at SR-198/43. In addition, the analysis recommends continued study of different alternatives near Corcoran, Wasco and Shafter – providing for an elevated route through each town or an at-grade bypass to the east. The analysis recommends that four alternative alignments near the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way be withdrawn from further review.

An at-grade alternative route is also being considered around the town of Allensworth to avoid impacting the Allensworth Ecological Preserve. The report recommends that 12 other local options not be included in further studies, including at-grade routes that go directly through the towns of Corcoran, Wasco and Shafter.

The analysis for Bakersfield identified two options for continued study, both of them elevated. One, known as the blue alignment, passes through the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail yard and runs next to the city's Amtrak station. The other, known as the red alignment, runs north of the BNSF facility and one block south of the Amtrak station.

The Fresno to Bakersfield analysis recommends four sites for continued study as potential locations of a Heavy Maintenance Facility (HMF) that would bring hundreds of jobs to the selected site:

- **Fresno Works** – Located in Fresno
- **Kings County** – Located in Hanford
- **Kern Council of Governments** – Located in Wasco
- **Kern Council of Governments** – Located in Shafter

The analysis considered proposed heavy maintenance facility sites in the cities of Angiola, Allensworth, McFarland and Bakersfield, but found that because of land size, distance from recommended alignments and/or environmental impacts, these locations should not be included in further studies.

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